

health problems. I look forward to reading Wharton's next edition.

Shelley J. Rechner, BSc (HM), MD, CCFP

Assistant professor
Department of Family Medicine
McMaster University
Hamilton, Ont.

MENTAL HEALTH LAW AND PRACTICE

Julio Arboleda-Flórez and Margaret Copithorne. Illust. Carswell, Scarborough, Ont. 1995. \$135. ISBN 9547062-855

Overall rating: Excellent
Strengths: Clarity, rich references and discussion
Weaknesses: Omits Quebec; future usefulness will depend on speed and quality of updates
Audience: Lawyers, and practitioners and administrators working in mental health facilities

This looseleaf book, subtitled "a Guide to the Alberta Mental Health Act and Related Canadian Legislation," is of considerably wider national interest than its subtitle suggests. Updates, to be published twice yearly at an estimated annual cost of \$75, will reflect Canada-wide developments in law in this area. Dr. Julio Arboleda-Flórez is head of the Forensic Division, Faculty of Medicine, University of Calgary, and Ms. Margaret Copithorne is legal consultant to the Forensic Division, Department of Psychiatry, Calgary General Hospital. Arboleda-Flórez is a well-respected commentator on legal aspects of mental health care and on the significance of mental status to criminal law and procedure.

The text is organized thematically, and individual topics are easy to find through the comprehensive table of contents and an ample index. Chapter 1 concerns the apprehension, detention and discharge of voluntary and involuntary patients,

including those held under criminal law. Legal and clinical definitions of emergency detention and treatment are contrasted, relevant statutes reviewed and different concepts of "dangerousness" explained. Chapter 2 considers patients' rights and remedies under common law, legislation and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Citations of Canadian judgments make this chapter a valuable reference source.

Chapter 3 deals with the powers and duties of staff in mental health facilities, including detention without treatment. Chapter 4 considers confidentiality and disclosure of records, with particular reference to the Supreme Court of Canada's 1992 decision in *McInerney v. MacDonald* on fiduciary duties and disclosure to patients. Chapter 5 covers capacity, treatment and control, including the specific types of competencies that mental health professionals assess and the times when assessment is appropriate (other than when it is mandated by a judge or legislation). This chapter discusses informed consent to treatment and informed refusal in a helpful manner. The concluding chapter deals with review panels, including their legal characteristics, roles and duties. The cases concerning the legality of the procedures of such panels include a review of the principles of administrative law and of the production and admissibility of evidence. Appendices include a lawyer's primer on common drugs used in psychiatry as well as sample forms and letters.

This book will be of immense service to lawyers and mental health professionals who seek to understand the legal context and content of their practice. It will be of particular value to mental health professionals in urgent situations, who need to know quickly how the law addresses specific topics of concern. Hospitals and other facilities that care for patients with mental disor-

ders, even occasionally, should consider subscribing to this text and its updates. Frequent references to the relevant scholarly literature in Canada, England and the United States make it a valuable academic resource as well.

The book gives helpful explanations of selected Canadian and English cases, but there is no reference to the Quebec Civil Code or cases. However, legal and mental health practitioners elsewhere in Canada have good reason to welcome this book and the authors' commitment to keep it contemporary by issuing updates. No one should be deterred by the implication in the subtitle that the publication applies only to Alberta. With skill and insight, the authors present mental health law relevant to all areas of Canada where common law is used.

Bernard M. Dickens, PhD, LL.D.

Professor of law
Faculties of Law and Medicine
University of Toronto
Toronto, Ont.

MAKING THE PATIENT YOUR PARTNER: COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR DOCTORS AND OTHER CAREGIVERS

Thomas Gordon and W. Sterling Edwards. 213 pp. Illust. Auburn House, Westport, Conn. 1995. \$49.95 (US). ISBN 0-86569-255-6

Overall rating: Fair
Strengths: Summarizes most of the recent information on effective communication with patients
Weaknesses: Much of the information is aimed at a general audience
Audience: Health care professionals who deal directly with patients and others who care for the ill, including family and friends

This book is coauthored by unlikely collaborators, which piqued my curiosity. Thomas Gordon is a well-known psychologist